

A

*Full and True Account*

*of the*

*Battel*

*Fought last Friday*

*Between the*

*Antient and the Modern Books*

*in St. James's Library*

## THE BOOKSELLER TO THE READER<sup>1</sup>

The following Discourse, as it is unquestionably of the same Author, so it seems to have been written about the same time with the former, I mean, the Year 1697, when the famous Dispute was on Foot, about *Antient and Modern Learning*. The Controversy took its Rise from an Essay of Sir *William Temple's*,<sup>2</sup> upon that Subject; which was answer'd by *W. Wotton*, B.D. with an Appendix by Dr. *Bentley*,<sup>3</sup> endeavouring to destroy the Credit of *Æsop* and *Phalaris*, for Authors, whom Sir *William Temple* had in the Essay beforementioned, highly commended. In that Appendix, the Doctor falls hard upon a new Edition of *Phalaris*, put out by the Honourable *Charles Boyle* (now *Earl of Orrery*) to which, Mr. *Boyle* replied at large,<sup>4</sup> with great Learning and Wit; and the Doctor, voluminously, rejoyned. In this Dispute, the Town highly resented to see a Person of Sir *William Temple's* Character and Merits, roughly used by the two Reverend Gentlemen aforesaid, and without any manner of Provocation. At length, there appearing no End of the Quarrel, our Author tells us, that the books in St. *James's* Library,<sup>5</sup> looking upon themselves as Parties principally concerned, took up the Controversie, and came to a decisive Battel; But, the Manuscript, by the Injury of Fortune, or Weather, being in several Places imperfect, we cannot learn to which side the Victory fell.

<sup>1</sup> probably written just before publication of *The Battle* in 1704.

<sup>2</sup> Temple's *Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning* was a defence of the Ancients.

<sup>3</sup> The second edition of Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1697) included as an appendix Bentley's *Dissertations upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, in which the enormous weight of his scholarship was used to show that the *Phalaris* Epistles were spurious.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Bentley's *Dissertations . . . Examin'd by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.* (1698).

<sup>5</sup> the Royal Library in St. James's Palace.

I must warn the Reader, to beware of applying to Persons what is here meant, only of Books in the most literal Sense. So, when *Virgil* is mentioned, we are not to understand the Person of a famous Poet, call'd by that Name, but only certain Sheets of Paper, bound up in Leather, containing in Print, the Works of the said Poet, and so of the rest.

## THE PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR

Satyr is a sort of *Glass*, wherein Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own; which is the chief Reason for that kind of Reception it meets in the World, and that so very few are offended with it. But if it should happen otherwise, the Danger is not great; and, I have learned from long Experience, never to apprehend Mischief from those Understandings, I have been able to provoke; For, Anger and Fury, though they add Strength to the *Sinews* of the *Body*, yet are found to relax those of the *Mind*, and to render all its Efforts feeble and impotent.

There is a *Brain* that will endure but one *Scumming*: Let the Owner gather it with Discretion, and manage his little Stock with Husbandry; but of all things, let him beware of bringing it under the *Lash* of his *Betters*; because, That will make it all bubble up into Impertinence, and he will find no new Supply: Wit, without knowledge, being a Sort of *Cream*, which gathers in a Night to the Top, and by a skilful Hand, may be soon *whipt* into *Froth*; but once scumm'd away, what appears underneath will be fit for nothing, but to be thrown to the Hogs.

*A Full and True Account  
of the Battel  
Fought Last Friday, &c.*

Whoever examines with due Circumspection into the <sup>1</sup>*Annual Records of Time*, will find it remarked, that *War is the Child of Pride*, and *Pride the Daughter of Riches*; The former of which Assertions may be soon granted; but one cannot so easily subscribe to the latter: For *Pride* is nearly related to *Beggary* and *Want*, either by Father or Mother, and sometimes by both; And, to speak naturally, it very seldom happens among Men to fall out, when all have enough: Invasions usually travelling from *North* to *South*, that is to say, from *Poverty* upon *Plenty*. The most antient and natural Grounds of Quarrels, are *Lust* and *Avarice*; which, tho' we may allow to be Brethren or collateral Branches of *Pride*, are certainly the Issues of *Want*. For, to speak in the Phrase of Writers upon the Politicks, we may observe in the Republick of *Dogs*, (which in its Original seems to be an Institution of the *Many*) that the whole State is ever in the profoundest Peace, after a full Meal; and, that Civil Broils arise among them, when it happens for one great *Bone* to be seized on by some *leading Dog*, who either divides it among the *Few*, and then it falls to an *Oligarchy*, or keeps it to Himself, and then it runs up to a *Tyranny*. The same Reasoning also, holds Place among them, in those Dissensions we behold upon a Turgescency in any of their Females. For, the Right of Possession lying in

<sup>1</sup> *Riches produceth pride; Pride is War's Ground, &c.* Vid. *Ephem. de Mary Clarke*; opt. Edit.<sup>1</sup> [Footnotes indicated by italic superior figures contain Swift's own editorial material, except where otherwise noted.]

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Vincent Wing's almanac, printed by Mary Clark. *Ephem: ephemeris.*

common (it being impossible to establish a Property in so delicate a Case) Jealousies and Suspicions do so abound, that the whole Commonwealth of that Street, is reduced to a manifest *State of War*, of every *Citizen* against every *Citizen*; till some One of more Courage, Conduct, or Fortune than the rest, seizes and enjoys the Prize; Upon which, naturally arises Plenty of Heartburning, and Envy, and Snarling against the *Happy Dog*. Again, if we look upon any of these Republicks engaged in a Foreign War, either of Invasion or Defence, we shall find, the same Reasoning will serve, as to the Grounds and Occasions of each; and, that *Poverty*, or *Want*, in some Degree or other, (whether Real, or in Opinion, which makes no Alteration in the Case) has a great Share, as well as *Pride*, on the Part of the Aggressor.

Now, whoever will please to take this Scheme, and either reduce or adapt it to an Intellectual State, or Commonwealth of Learning, will soon discover the first Ground of Disagreement between the two great Parties at this Time in Arms; and may form just Conclusions upon the Merits of either Cause. But the Issue or Events of this War are not so easie to conjecture at: For, the present Quarrel is so enflamed by the warm Heads of either Faction, and the Pretensions *somewhere or other* so exorbitant, as not to admit the least Overtures of Accommodation: This Quarrel first began (as I have heard it affirmed by an old Dweller in the Neighbourhood) about a small Spot of Ground, *lying* and *being* upon one of the two Tops of the Hill *Parnassus*; the highest and largest of which had, it seems, been time out of Mind, in quiet Possession of certain Tenants, call'd the *Antients*; And the other was held by the *Moderns*. But, these disliking their present Station, sent certain Ambassadors to the *Antients*, complaining of a great Nuisance, how the Height of that Part of *Parnassus*, quite spoiled the Prospect of theirs, especially towards the *East*;<sup>2</sup> and therefore, to avoid a War, offered them the Choice of this Alternative; either that the *Antients* would please to remove themselves and their Effects down to the lower Summity,

\* Temple argued in his *Essay* that the *Moderns* were scarcely aware

of the achievements of the East in the ancient world.



which the *Moderns* would graciously surrender to them, and advance in their Place; or else, that the said *Antients* will give leave to the *Moderns* to come with Shovels and Mattocks, and level the said Hill, as low as they shall think it convenient. To which, the *Antients* made Answer: How little they expected such a Message as this, from a Colony, whom they had admitted out of their own Free Grace, to so near a Neighbourhood. That, as to their own Seat, they were *Aborigines* of it, and therefore, to talk with them of a Removal or Surrender, was a Language they did not understand. That, if the Height of the Hill, on their side, shortned the Prospect of the *Moderns*, it was a Disadvantage they could not help, but desired them to consider, whether that Injury (if it be any) were not largely recompenced by the *Shade* and *Shelter* it afforded them. That, as to levelling or digging down, it was either Folly or Ignorance to propose it, if they did, or did not know, how that side of the Hill was an entire Rock, which would break their Tools and Hearts; without any Damage to itself. That they would therefore advise the *Moderns*, rather to raise their own side of the Hill, than dream of pulling down that of the *Antients*, to the former of which, they would not only give Licence, but also largely contribute. All this was rejected by the *Moderns*, with much Indignation, who still insisted upon one of the two Expedients; And so this Difference broke out into a long and obstinate War, maintain'd on the one Part, by Resolution, and by the Courage of certain Leaders and Allies; but, on the other, by the greatness of their Number, upon all Defeats, affording continual Recruits. In this Quarrel, whole Rivulets of *Ink* have been exhausted, and the Virulence of both Parties enormously augmented. Now, it must here be understood, that *Ink* is the great missive Weapon, in all Battels of the *Learned*, which, convey'd thro' a sort of Engine, call'd a *Quill*, infinite Numbers of these are darted at the Enemy, by the Valiant on each side, with equal Skill and Violence, as if it were an Engagement of *Porcupines*. This malignant Liquor was compounded by the Engineer, who invented it, of two Ingredients, which are *Gall* and *Copperas*, by its Bitterness and Venom, to *Suit* in some Degree, as well as to *Foment* the Genius of the Combatants. And

as the *Grecians*, after an Engagement, when they could not agree about the Victory, were wont to set up Trophies on both sides, the beaten Party being content to be at the same Expence, to keep it self in Countenance (A laudable and antient Custom, happily reviv'd of late, in the Art of War) so the *Learned*, after a sharp and bloody Dispute, do on both sides hang out their Trophies too, which-ever comes by the worst. These Trophies have largely inscribed on them the Merits of the Cause; a full impartial Account of such a Battel, and how the Victory fell clearly to the Party that set them up. They are known to the World under several Names: As, *Disputes, Arguments, Rejoinders, Brief Considerations, Answers, Replies, Remarks, Reflexions, Objections, Confutations*. For a very few Days they are fixed up in all Publick Places, either by themselves or their <sup>2</sup>Representatives, for Passengers to gaze at: From whence the chiefest and largest are removed to certain Magazines, they call, *Libraries*, there to remain in a Quarter purposely assign'd them, and from thenceforth, begin to be called, *Books of Controversie*.

In these Books, is wonderfully instilled and preserved, the Spirit of each Warriour, while he is alive; and after his Death, his Soul transmigrates there, to inform<sup>3</sup> them. This, at least, is the more common Opinion; But, I believe, it is with Libraries, as with other Cemeteries, where some Philosophers affirm, that a certain Spirit, which they call *Brutum hominis*, hovers over the Monument, till the Body is corrupted, and turns to *Dust*, or to *Worms*, but then vanishes or dissolves: So, we may say, a restless Spirit haunts over every *Book*, till *Dust* or *Worms* have seized upon it; which to some, may happen in a few Days, but to others, later; And therefore, *Books* of Controversy, being of all others, haunted by the most disorderly Spirits, have always been confined in a separate Lodge from the rest; and for fear of mutual violence against each other, it was thought Prudent by our Ancestors, to bind them to the Peace with strong Iron Chains. Of which Invention, the original Occasion was this: When the Works of *Scotus* first came out, they were carried to a certain

<sup>1</sup> Their Title-Pages.

<sup>2</sup> to animate.



great Library, and had Lodgings appointed them; But this Author was no sooner settled, than he went to visit his Master *Aristotle*, and there both concerted together to seize *Plato* by main Force, and turn him out from his antient Station among the *Divines*, where he had peaceably dwelt near Eight Hundred Years. The Attempt succeeded, and the two Usurpers have reigned ever since in his stead: But to maintain Quiet for the future, it was decreed, that all *Polemicks* of the larger Size, should be held fast with a Chain.

By this Expedient, the publick Peace of Libraries, might certainly have been preserved, if a new Species of controversial Books had not arose of late Years, instinct with a most malignant Spirit, from the War abovementioned, between the *Learned*, about the higher Summit of *Parnassus*.

When these Books were first admitted into the Publick Libraries, I remember to have said upon Occasion, to several Persons concerned, how I was sure, they would create Broyls wherever they came, unless a World of Care were taken: And therefore, I advised, that the Champions of each side should be coupled together, or otherwise mixt, that like the blending of contrary Poysons, their Malignity might be employ'd among themselves. And it seems, I was neither an ill Prophet, nor an ill Counsellor; for it was nothing else but the Neglect of this Caution, which gave Occasion to the terrible Fight that happened on *Friday* last between the *Antient* and *Modern Books* in the *King's Library*. Now, because the Talk of this Battel is so fresh in every body's Mouth, and the Expectation of the Town so great to be informed in the Particulars; I, being possessed of all Qualifications requisite in an *Historian*, and retained by neither Party, have resolved to comply with the urgent *Importunity of my Friends*, by writing down a full impartial Account thereof.

The *Guardian* of the *Regal Library*,<sup>4</sup> a Person of great Valor, but chiefly renowned for his *Humanity*, had been a fierce

<sup>3</sup> *The Honourable Mr. Boyle, in the Preface to his Edition of Phalaris, says, he was refus'd a Manuscript by the Library-Keeper, pro solita Humanitate sua.*

<sup>4</sup> Bentley, who had been librarian since 1694.

Champion for the *Moderns*, and in an Engagement upon *Parnassus*, had vowed, with his own Hands, to knock down two of the *Antient* Chiefs,<sup>5</sup> who guarded a small Pass on the superior Rock; but endeavouring to climb up, was cruelly obstructed by his own unhappy Weight, and tendency towards his Center; a Quality, to which, those of the *Modern* Party, are extreme subject; For, being lightheaded, they have in Speculation, a wonderful Agility, and conceive nothing too high for them to mount; but in reducing to Practice, discover a mighty Pressure about their Posteriors and their Heels. Having thus failed in his Design, the disappointed Champion bore a cruel Rancour to the *Antients*, which he resolved to gratifie, by shewing all Marks of his Favour to the *Books* of their Adversaries, and lodging them in the fairest Apartments; when at the same time, whatever *Book* had the boldness to own it self for an Advocate of the *Antients*, was buried alive in some obscure Corner, and threatned upon the least Displeasure, to be turned out of Doors. Besides, it so happened, that about this time, there was a strange Confusion of Place among all the *Books* in the Library; for which several Reasons were assigned. Some imputed it to a great heap of *learned Dust*, which a perverse Wind blew off from a Shelf of *Moderns* into the *Keeper's* Eyes. Others affirmed, He had a Humour to pick the *Worms* out of the *Schoolmen*, and swallow them fresh and fasting; whereof some fell upon his *Spleen*, and some climbed up into his Head, to the great Perturbation of both. And lastly, others maintained, that by walking much in the dark about the Library, he had quite lost the Situation of it out of his Head; And therefore, in replacing his *Books*, he was apt to mistake, and clap *Des-Cartes* next to *Aristotle*; Poor *Plato* had got between *Hobbes* and the *Seven Wise Masters*, and *Virgil* was hemm'd in with *Dryden* on one side, and *Withers* on the other.<sup>6</sup>

Mean while, those *Books* that were Advocates for the *Moderns*, chose out one from among them, to make a Progress thro' the

<sup>5</sup> Phalaris and Aesop.

<sup>6</sup> Coupling Dryden with George Withers (1588-1667), a poet generally ridiculed at the time, is an

example of Swift's technique of satire by juxtaposition. Swift believed that Dryden was an unprincipled opportunist.

whole Library, examine the Number and Strength of their Party, and concert their Affairs. This Messenger performed all things very industriously, and brought back with him a List of their Forces, in all Fifty Thousand, consisting chiefly of *light Horse*, *heavy-armed Foot*, and *Mercenaries*; Whereof the *Foot* were in general but sorrily armed, and worse clad; Their *Horses* large, but extremely out of Case and Heart; However, some few by trading among the *Antients*, had furnisht themselves tolerably enough.

While Things were in this Ferment; *Discord* grew extremely high, hot Words passed on both sides, and ill blood was plentifully bred. Here a solitary *Antient*, squeezed up among a whole Shelf of *Moderns*, offered fairly to dispute the Case, and to prove by manifest Reasons, that the Priority was due to them, from long Possession, and in regard of their Prudence, Antiquity, and above all, their great Merits towards the *Moderns*. But these denied the Premises, and seemed very much to wonder, how the *Antients* could pretend to insist upon their Antiquity, when it was so plain (if they went to that) the *Moderns* were much the more *Antient* of the two. As for any Obligations they owed to the *Antients*, they renounced them all. 'Tis true, said they, *we are informed, some few of our Party have been so mean to borrow their Subsistence from You; But the rest, infinitely the greater number (and especially, we French and English) were so far from stooping to so base an Example, that there never passed, till this very hour, six Words between us. For, our Horses are of our own breeding, our Arms of our own forging, and our Cloaths of our own cutting out and sowing. Plato was by chance upon the next Shelf, and observing those that spoke to be in the ragged Plight, mentioned a while ago; their Jades lean and foundred, their Weapons of rotten Wood, their Armour rusty, and nothing but Raggs underneath; he laugh'd loud, and in his pleasant way, swore, By G—, he believ'd them.*

Now, the *Moderns* had not proceeded in their late Negotiation, with Secrecy enough to escape the Notice of the Enemy.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Modern Paradox.

For, those Advocates, who had begun the Quarrel, by setting first on Foot the Dispute of Precedency, talkt so loud of coming to a Battel, that *Temple*<sup>7</sup> happened to over-hear them, and gave immediate Intelligence to the *Antients*; who thereupon drew up their scattered Troops together, resolving to act upon the defensive; Upon which, several of the *Moderns* fled over to their Party, and among the rest, *Temple* himself. This *Temple* having been educated and long conversed among the *Antients*, was, of all the *Moderns*, their greatest Favorite, and became their greatest Champion.

Things were at this Crisis, when a material Accident fell out. For, upon the highest Corner of a large Window, there dwelt a certain *Spider*, swollen up to the first Magnitude, by the Destruction of infinite Numbers of *Flies*, whose Spoils lay scattered before the Gates of his Palace, like human Bones before the Cave of some Giant. The Avenues to his Castle were guarded with Turn-pikes, and Palissadoes, after all the *Modern* way of Fortification. After you had passed several Courts, you came to the Center, wherein you might behold the *Constable* himself in his own Lodgings, which had Windows fronting to each Avenue, and Ports to sally out upon all Occasions of Prey or Defence. In this Mansion he had for some Time dwelt in Peace and Plenty, without Danger to his *Person* by *Swallows* from above, or to his *Palace* by *Brooms* from below: When it was the Pleasure of Fortune to conduct thither a wandring *Bee*, to whose Curiosity a broken Pane in the Glass had discovered it self; and in he went, where expiating a while, he at last happened to alight upon one of the outward Walls of the *Spider's* Cittadel; which yielding to the unequal Weight, sunk down to the very Foundation. Thrice he endeavoured to force his Passage, and Thrice the Center shook. The *Spider* within, feeling the terrible Convulsion, supposed at first, that *Nature* was approaching to her final Dissolution; or else, that *Beelzebub* with all his Legions, was come to revenge the Death of many thousands of his Subjects, whom this Enemy had slain and devoured. However, he at length valiantly resolved to issue forth, and meet his Fate. Mean while, the *Bee*

<sup>7</sup> *Temple's Essay.*



had acquitted himself of his Toils, and posted securely at some Distance, was employed in cleansing his *Wings*, and disengaging them from the ragged Remnants of the Cobweb. By this time the *Spider* was adventured out, when beholding the Chasms, and Ruins, and Dilapidations of his Fortress, he was very near at his Wit's end, he stormed and swore like a Mad-man, and swelled till he was ready to burst. At length, casting his Eye upon the *Bee*, and wisely gathering Causes from Events, (for they knew each other by Sight) *A Plague split you*, said he, *for a giddy Son of a Whore; Is it you, with a Vengeance, that have made this Litter here? Could you not look before you, and be d—n'd? Do you think I have nothing else to do (in the Devil's Name) but to Mend and Repair after your Arse? Good Words, Friend*, said the *Bee*, (having now pruned himself, and being disposed to drole) *I'll give you my Hand and Word to come near your Kennel no more; I was never in such a confounded Pickle since I was born. Sirrah*, replied the *Spider*, *if it were not for breaking an old Custom in our Family, never to stir abroad against an Enemy, I should come and teach you better Manners. I pray, have Patience*, said the *Bee*, *or you will spend your Substance, and for ought I see, you may stand in need of it all, towards the Repair of your House. Rogue, Rogue*, replied the *Spider*, *yet, methinks, you should have more Respect to a Person, whom all the World allows to be so much your Betters.*<sup>8</sup> *By my Troth*, said the *Bee*, *the Comparison will amount to a very good Jest, and you will do me a Favour, to let me know the Reasons, that all the World is pleased to use in so hopeful a Dispute.* At this, the *Spider* having swelled himself into the Size and Posture of a Disputant, began his Argument in the true Spirit of Controversy, with a Resolution to be heartily scurrilous and angry, to urge on his own Reasons, without the least Regard to the Answers or Objections of his Opposite; and fully predetermined in his Mind against all Conviction.

*Not to disparage my self*, said he, *by the Comparison with such a Rascal; What art thou but a Vagabond without House or*

<sup>8</sup> According to seventeenth-century usage, "betters" might apply to a single person.



*Home, without Stock or Inheritance; Born to no Possession of your own, but a Pair of Wings, and a Drone-Pipe. Your Livelihood is an universal Plunder upon Nature; a Freebooter over Fields and Gardens; and for the sake of Stealing, will rob a Nettle as readily as a Violet. Whereas I am a domestick Animal, furnisht with a Native Stock within my self. This large Castle (to shew my Improvements in the Mathematicks) is all built with my own Hands, and the Materials extracted altogether out of my own Person.*

*I am glad, answered the Bee, to hear you grant at least, that I am come honestly by my Wings and my Voice, for then, it seems, I am obliged to Heaven alone for my Flights and my Musick; and Providence would never have bestowed on me two such Gifts, without designing them for the noblest Ends. I visit, indeed, all the Flowers and Blossoms of the Field and the Garden, but whatever I collect from thence, enriches my self, without the least Injury to their Beauty, their Smell, or their Taste. Now, for you and your Skill in Architecture, and other Mathematicks, I have little to say: In that Building of yours, there might, for ought I know, have been Labor and Method enough, but by woful Experience for us both, 'tis too plain, the Materials are nought, and I hope, you will henceforth take Warning, and consider Duration and matter, as well as method and Art. You, boast, indeed, of being obliged to no other Creature, but of drawing, and spinning out all from your self; That is to say, if we may judge of the Liquor in the Vessel by what issues out, You possess a good plentiful Store of Dirt and Poison in your Breast; And, tho' I would by no means, lessen or disparage your genuine Stock of either, yet, I doubt you are somewhat obliged for an Encrease of both, to a little foreign Assistance. Your inherent Portion of Dirt, does not fail of Acquisitions, by Sweepings exhaled from below: and one Insect furnishes you with a share of Poison to destroy another. So that in short, the Question comes all to this; Whether is the nobler Being of the two, That which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an overweening Pride, which feeding and engendering on it self, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last, but*

*Flybane and a Cobweb: Or That, which, by an universal Range, with long Search, much Study, true Judgment, and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax.*

This Dispute was managed with such Eagerness, Clamor, and Warmth, that the two Parties of *Books* in Arms below, stood Silent a while, waiting in Suspense what would be the Issue; which was not long undetermined: For the *Bee* grown impatient at so much loss of Time, fled strait away to a bed of *Roses*, without looking for a Reply; and left the *Spider* like an Orator, collected in himself, and just prepared to burst out.

It happened upon this Emergency, that *Æsop* broke silence first. He had been of late most barbarously treated by a strange Effect of the *Regent's Humanity*, who had tore off his Title-page, sorely defaced one half of his Leaves, and chained him fast among a Shelf of *Moderns*. Where soon discovering how high the Quarrel was like to proceed, He tried all his Arts, and turned himself to a thousand Forms: At length in the borrowed Shape of an *Ass*, the *Regent* mistook him for a *Modern*; by which means, he had Time and Opportunity to escape to the *Antients*, just when the *Spider* and the *Bee* were entring into their Contest; to which He gave His Attention with a world of Pleasure; and when it was ended, swore in the loudest Key, that in all his Life, he had never known two Cases so parallel and adapt to each other, as That in the Window, and this upon the Shelves. The *Disputants*, said he, *have admirably managed the Dispute between them, have taken in the full Strength of all that is to be said on both sides, and exhausted the Substance of every Argument pro and con. It is but to adjust the Reasonings of both to the present Quarrel, then to compare and apply the Labors and Fruits of each, as the Bee has learnedly deduced them; and we shall find the Conclusion fall plain and close upon the Moderns and Us. For, pray Gentlemen, was ever any thing so Modern as the Spider in his Air, his Turns, and his Paradoxes? He argues in the Behalf of You his Brethren, and Himself, with many Boastings of his native Stock, and great Genius; that he Spins and Spits wholly from himself, and scorns to own any Obligation or Assistance from without. Then he displays to you his great Skill*

*in Architecture, and Improvement in the Mathematicks. To all this, the Bee, as an Advocate, retained by us the Antients, thinks fit to Answer; That if one may judge of the great Genius or Inventions of the Moderns, by what they have produced, you will hardly have Countenance to bear you out in boasting of either. Erect your Schemes with as much Method and Skill as you please; yet, if the materials be nothing but Dirt, spun out of your own Entrails (the Guts of Modern Brains) the Edifice will conclude at last in a Cobweb: The Duration of which, like that of other Spiders Webs, may be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a Corner. For any Thing else of Genuine, that the Moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large Vein of Wrangling and Satyr, much of a Nature and Substance with the Spider's Poison; which, however, they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same Arts, by feeding upon the Insects and Vermin of the Age. As for Us, the Antients, We are content with the Bee, to pretend to Nothing of our own, beyond our Wings and our Voice: that is to say, our Flights and our Language; For the rest, whatever we have got, has been by infinite Labor, and search, and ranging thro' every Corner of Nature: The Difference is, that instead of Dirt and Poison, we have rather chose to fill our Hives with Honey and Wax, thus furnishing Mankind with the two Noblest of Things, which are Sweetness and Light.*

'Tis wonderful to conceive the Tumult arisen among the Books, upon the close of this long Descant of *Æsop*; Both Parties took the Hint, and heightened their Animosities so on a sudden, that they resolved it should come to a Battel. Immediately, the two main Bodies withdrew under their several Ensigns, to the farther Parts of the Library, and there entered into Cabals, and Consults<sup>9</sup> upon the present Emergency. The Moderns were in very warm Debates upon the Choice of their Leaders, and nothing less than the Fear impending from their Enemies, could have kept them from Mutinies upon this Occasion. The Difference was greatest among the *Horse*, where every private Trooper pretended to the chief Command, from *Tasso*

<sup>9</sup> consultations.



and Milton, to Dryden and Withers. The Light-Horse were Commanded by Cowly and Despreaux. There, came the Bowmen under their valiant Leaders, *Des-Cartes*, *Gassendi*, and *Hobbes*,<sup>10</sup> whose Strength was such, that they could shoot their Arrows beyond the *Atmosphere*, never to fall down again, but turn like that of *Evander*<sup>11</sup> into *Meteors*, or like the *Canonball* into *Stars*. *Paracelsus*<sup>12</sup> brought a *Squadron of Stink-Pot-Flingers* from the snowy Mountains of *Rhætia*. There, came a vast Body of *Dragoons*, of different Nations, under the leading of *Harvey*,<sup>13</sup> their great *Aga*:<sup>14</sup> Part armed with *Scythes*, the Weapons of Death; Part with *Launces* and long *Knives*, all steep in *Poison*; Part shot *Bullets* of a most malignant Nature, and used *white Powder* which infallibly killed without *Report*. There came several Bodies of *heavy-armed Foot*, all *Mercenaries*, under the Ensigns of *Guiccardine*,<sup>15</sup> *Davila*,<sup>16</sup> *Polydore Virgil*,<sup>17</sup> *Buchanan*,<sup>18</sup> *Mariana*,<sup>19</sup> *Cambden*,<sup>20</sup> and others. The *Engineers* were commanded by *Regiomontanus*<sup>21</sup> and *Wilkins*.<sup>22</sup> The rest were a confused Multitude, led by *Scotus*, *Aquinas*, and *Bellarmino*;<sup>23</sup> of mighty Bulk and Stature, but without either Arms, Courage, or Discipline. In the last Place, came infinite Swarms

<sup>10</sup> the leaders of modern philosophy.

<sup>11</sup> The arrow was that of *Acestes*, not *Evander*. See *Aeneid*, v.525-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Paracelsus* (c. 1490-1541) was a German physician, alchemist, and natural philosopher. The allusion is to his alchemical experiments and those of his followers.

<sup>13</sup> *William Harvey* (1578-1657), the discoverer of the circulation of the blood.

<sup>14</sup> a commander in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>15</sup> *Francesco Guicciardini* (1483-1540), celebrated Italian historian and statesman, author of *Storia d'Italia* (1561).

<sup>16</sup> *Enrico Caterino Davila* (1576-1631), author of the *Historia delle Guerre Civili di Francia* (1630).

<sup>17</sup> *Polydore Vergil* (1470-1555), author of *Anglicae Historiae* (1534).

<sup>18</sup> *George Buchanan* (1506-82), author

of *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582).

<sup>19</sup> *Juan de Mariana* (1536-1624), the great Spanish historian, author of *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* (1592-1605).

<sup>20</sup> *William Camden* (1551-1623), English antiquary and historian.

<sup>21</sup> *Johann Müller* (1436-76), mathematician and astronomer. His Latin name was taken from his birthplace, Königsberg.

<sup>22</sup> *John Wilkins* (1614-72), one of the founders of the Royal Society, author of *The Discovery of a World in the Moone; or, a Discourse tending to prove, that 'tis probable there may be another Habitable World in that Planet* (1638).

<sup>23</sup> *Roberto Bellarmino* (1542-1621), Italian cardinal and theologian who achieved fame as a Roman Catholic apologist.

of *Calones*, a disorderly Rout led by *Lestrangle*;<sup>24</sup> Rogues and Raggamuffins, that follow the Camp for nothing but the Plunder; All without *Coats* to cover them.

The Army of the *Antients* was much fewer in Number; *Homer* led the *Horse*, and *Pindar* the *Light-Horse*; *Euclid* was chief *Engineer*; *Plato* and *Aristotle* commanded the *Bow men*, *Herodotus* and *Livy* the *Foot*, *Hippocrates* the *Dragoons*. The *Allies*, led by *Vossius*<sup>25</sup> and *Temple*, brought up the Rear.

All things violently tending to a decisive Battel; *Fame*, who much frequented, and had a large Apartment formerly assigned her in the *Regal Library*, fled up strait to *Jupiter*, to whom she delivered a faithful account of all that passed between the two Parties below. (For, among the Gods, she always tells Truth.) *Jove* in great concern, convokes a Council in the *Milky-Way*. The Senate assembled, he declares the Occasion of convening them; a bloody Battel just impendent between two mighty Armies of *Antient* and *Modern* Creatures, call'd *Books*, wherein the Celestial Interest was but too deeply concerned. *Momus*,<sup>26</sup> the Patron of the *Moderns*, made an Excellent Speech in their Favor, which was answered by *Pallas* the Protectress of the *Antients*. The Assembly was divided in their affections; when *Jupiter* commanded the Book of Fate to be laid before Him. Immediately were brought by *Mercury*, three large Volumes in Folio, containing Memoirs of all Things past, present, and to come. The Clasps were of Silver, double Gilt; the Covers, of Celestial Turkey-leather, and the Paper such as here on Earth might almost pass for Vellum. *Jupiter* having silently read the Decree, would communicate the Import to none, but presently shut up the Book.

Without the Doors of this Assembly, there attended a vast Number of light, nimble Gods, menial Servants to *Jupiter*:

<sup>1</sup> *These are Pamphlets, which are not bound or cover'd.*

<sup>24</sup> Sir Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), English journalist and pamphleteer.

associated with the Anglican Church.

<sup>25</sup> Either Gerhard Johann Vossius (1577-1649) or his son, Isaak (1618-89), both brilliant scholars and

<sup>26</sup> In Greek mythology, the personification of censoriousness, and therefore an appropriate patron of modern critics.



These are his ministring Instruments in all Affairs below. They travel in a Caravan, more or less together, and are fastened to each other like a Link of Gally-slaves, by a light Chain, which passes from them to *Jupiter's* great Toe: And yet in receiving or delivering a Message, they may never approach above the lowest Step of his Throne, where he and they whisper to each other thro' a long hollow Trunk. These Deities are call'd by mortal Men, *Accidents*, or *Events*; but the Gods call them, *Second Causes*. *Jupiter* having delivered his Message to a certain Number of these Divinities, they flew immediately down to the Pinnacle of the Regal Library, and consulting a few Minutes, entered unseen, and disposed the Parties according to their Orders.

Mean while, *Momus* fearing the worst, and calling to mind an antient Prophecy, which bore no very good Face to his Children the *Moderns*; bent his Flight to the Region of a Malignant Deity, call'd *Criticism*. She dwelt on the Top of a snowy Mountain in *Nova Zembla*; there *Momus* found her extended in her Den, upon the Spoils of numberless Volumes half devoured. At her right Hand sat *Ignorance*, her Father and Husband, blind with Age; at her left, *Pride* her Mother, dressing her up in the Scraps of Paper herself had torn. There, was *Opinion* her Sister, light of Foot, hoodwinkt, and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning. About her play'd her Children, *Noise* and *Impudence*, *Dullness* and *Vanity*, *Positiveness*, *Pedantry*, and *Ill-Manners*. The Goddess herself had Claws like a Cat: Her Head, and Ears, and Voice, resembled those of an *Ass*; Her Teeth fallen out before; Her Eyes turned inward, as if she lookt only upon herself: Her Diet was the overflowing of her own *Gall*: Her *Spleen* was so large, as to stand prominent like a Dug of the first Rate, nor wanted Excrescencies in Form of Teats, at which a Crew of ugly Monsters were greedily sucking; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of *Spleen* encreased faster than the Sucking could diminish it. Goddess, said *Momus*, *can you sit idly here, while our devout Worshippers, the Moderns, are this Minute entring into a cruel Battel, and, perhaps, now lying under the Swords of their Enemies; Who then here-*

*after, will ever sacrifice, or build Altars to our Divinities? Haste, therefore to the British Isle, and, if possible, prevent their Destruction, while I make Factions among the Gods, and gain them over to our Party.*

Momus having thus delivered himself, staid not for an answer, but left the Goddess to her own Resentment; Up she rose in a Rage, and as it is the Form upon such Occasions, began a Soliloquy. *'Tis I (said she) who give Wisdom to Infants and Idiots; By Me, Children grow wiser than their Parents. By Me, Beaux become Politicians; and School-Boys, Judges of Philosophy. By Me, Sophisters debate, and conclude upon the Depths of Knowledge; and Coffee-house Wits instinct by Me, can correct an Author's Style, and display his minutest Errors, without understanding a Syllable of his Matter or his Language. By Me, Striplings spend their Judgment, as they do their Estate, before it comes into their Hands. 'Tis I, who have deposed Wit and Knowledge from their Empire over Poetry, and advanced my self in their stead. And shall a few upstart Antients dare to oppose me? – But, come, my aged Parents, and you, my Children dear, and thou my beauteous Sister; let us ascend my Chariot, and hast to assist our devout Moderns, who are now sacrificing to us a Hecatomb, as I perceive by that grateful Smell, which from thence reaches my Nostrils.*

The Goddess and her Train having mounted the Chariot, which was drawn by *tame Geese*, flew over infinite Regions, shedding her Influence in due Places, till at length, she arrived at her beloved Island of *Britain*; but in hovering over its *Metro-polis*, what Blessings did she not let fall upon her Seminaries of *Gresham* and *Covent-Garden*?<sup>27</sup> And now she reach'd the fatal Plain of *St. James's Library*, at what time the two Armies were upon the Point to engage; where entring with all her Caravan, unseen, and landing upon a Case of Shelves, now desart, but once inhabited by a Colony of *Virtuoso's* she staid a while to observe the Posture of both Armies.

But here, the tender Cares of a Mother began to fill her

<sup>27</sup> Gresham College was the home of the Royal Society. Will's Coffee-

house, a favourite meeting-place of the wits, was in Covent Garden.

Thoughts, and move in her Breast. For, at the Head of a Troop of *Modern Bow-men*, she cast her Eyes upon her Son *W-tt-n*; to whom the Fates had assigned a very short Thread. *W-tt-n*, a young Hero, whom an unknown Father of mortal Race, begot by stollen Embraces with this Goddess. He was the Darling of his Mother, above all her Children, and she resolved to go and comfort Him. But first, according to the good old Custom of Deities, she cast about to change her Shape; for fear the Divinity of her Countenance might dazzle his Mortal Sight, and overcharge the rest of his Senses. She therefore gathered up her Person into an *Octavo* Compass: Her Body grew white and arid, and split in pieces with Driness; the thick turned into Pastboard, and the thin into Paper, upon which, her Parents and Children, artfully strowed a Black Juice, or Decoction of Gall and Soot, in Form of Letters; her Head, and Voice, and Spleen, kept their primitive Form, and that which before, was a Cover of Skin, did still continue so. In which Guise, she march'd on towards the *Moderns*, undistinguishable in Shape and Dress from the *Divine Bn-tl-y*, *W-tt-n's* dearest Friend. *Brave W-tt-n*, said the Goddess, *Why do our Troops stand idle here, to spend their present Vigour and Opportunity of this Day? Away, let us haste to the Generals, and advise to give the Onset immediately.* Having spoke thus, she took the ugliest of her Monsters, full glutted from her Spleen, and flung it invisibly into his Mouth; which flying strait up into his Head, squeez'd out his Eye-Balls, gave him a distorted Look, and half overturned his Brain. Then she privately ordered two of her beloved Children, *Dulness*, and *Ill-Manners*, closely to attend his Person in all Encounters. Having thus accoutred him, she vanished in a Mist, and the *Hero* perceived it was the Goddess, his Mother.

The destined Hour of Fate, being now arrived, the Fight began; whereof, before I dare adventure to make a particular Description, I must, after Example of other Authors, petition for a hundred Tongues, and Mouths, and Hands, and Pens; which would all be too little to perform so immense a Work. Say, Goddess, that presidest over History; who it was that first advanced in the Field of Battel. *Paracelsus*, at the Head of his

*Dragoons*, observing *Galen* in the adverse Wing, darted his Javelin with a mighty Force, which the brave *Antient* received upon his Shield, the Point breaking in the second fold.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Hic pauca desunt.*

\* \* \* \* \*

They bore the wounded *Aga*, on their Shields to his Chariot

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Desunt nonnulla.*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Then *Aristotle* observing *Bacon*<sup>28</sup> advance with a furious Mien, drew his Bow to the Head, and let fly his Arrow, which miss'd the valiant *Modern*, and went hizzing over his Head; but *Des-Cartes* it hit; The Steel Point quickly found a *Defect* in his *Head-Piece*; it pierced the Leather and the Past-board, and went in at his Right Eye. The Torture of the Pain, whirled the valiant *Bowman* round, till Death, like a Star of superior Influence, drew him into his own *Vortex*.<sup>29</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

*Ingens hiatus hic in MS.*

\* \* \* \* \*

when *Homer* appeared at the Head of the Cavalry, mounted on a furious Horse, with Difficulty managed by the Rider himself, but which no other Mortal durst approach; He rode among the Enemies Ranks, and bore down all before him. Say, Goddess, whom he slew first, and whom he slew last. First, *Gondibert*<sup>30</sup> advanced against Him, clad in heavy Armour, and mounted on a staid sober Gelding, not so famed for his Speed as his Docility in kneeling, whenever his Rider would mount or alight. He had made a Vow to *Pallas*, that he would never leave the Field, till he had spoiled *Homer* of his Armour; Madman, who had never

<sup>28</sup> *Vid. Homer.*

<sup>28</sup> Temple had praised Bacon as a great modern wit. He thus escapes injury here.

<sup>29</sup> an allusion to Descartes's theory of vortices.

<sup>30</sup> Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert* (1650).



once *seen* the Wearer, nor understood his Strength. Him *Homer* overthrew, Horse and Man to the Ground, there to be trampled and choak'd in the Dirt. Then, with a long Spear, he slew *Denham* a stout *Modern*, who from his <sup>7</sup>Father's side, derived his Lineage from *Apollo*, but his Mother was of Mortal Race. He fell, and bit the Earth. The Celestial Part *Apollo* took, and made it a Star, but the Terrestrial lay wallowing upon the Ground. Then *Homer* slew *W--sl--y*<sup>31</sup> with a kick of his Horse's heel; He took *Perrault* by mighty Force out of his Saddle, then hurl'd him at *Fontenelle*,<sup>32</sup> with the same Blow dashing out both their Brains.

On the left Wing of the Horse, *Virgil* appeared in shining Armour, compleatly fitted to his Body; He was mounted on a dapple grey Steed, the slowness of whose Pace, was an Effect of the highest Mettle and Vigour. He cast his Eye on the Adverse Wing, with a desire to find an Object worthy of his valour, when behold, upon a sorrel Gelding of a monstrous Size, appear'd a Foe, issuing from among the thickest of the Enemy's Squadron's; But his Speed was less than his Noise; for his Horse, old and lean, spent the Dregs of his Strength in a high Trot, which tho' it made slow advances, yet caused a loud Clashing of his Armor, terrible to hear. The two Cavaliers had now approached within the Throw of a Lance, when the Stranger desired a Parley, and lifting up the Vizard of his Helmet, a Face hardly appeared from within, which after a pause, was known for that of the renowned *Dryden*. The brave *Antient* suddenly started, as one possess'd with Surprise and Disappointment together: For, the Helmet was nine times too large for the Head, which appeared Situate far in the hinder Part, even like the Lady in a Lobster,<sup>33</sup> or like

<sup>7</sup> *Sir John Denham's Poems are very Unequal, extremely Good, and very Indifferent, so that his Detractor's said, he was not the real Author of Coopers-Hill.*

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Wesley (1662-1735), the father of John and Charles Wesley. He assisted John Dunton with the *Athenian Mercury* and wrote verse.

<sup>32</sup> Bernard de Fontenelle (1657-1757)

and Charles Perrault (1628-1703), whose defence of the Moderns in France began the Ancients-Moderns controversy.

<sup>33</sup> the calcareous structure in the stomach of a lobster.



a Mouse under a Canopy of State, or like a shrivled Beau from within the Penthouse of a modern Perewig: And the voice was suited to the Visage, sounding weak and remote. *Dryden* in a long Harangue<sup>34</sup> soothed up the good *Antient*, called him *Father*, and by a large deduction of Genealogies, made it plainly appear, that they were nearly related. Then he humbly proposed an Exchange of Armor, as a lasting Mark of Hospitality between them. *Virgil* consented (for the Goddess *Diffidence* came unseen, and cast a Mist before his Eyes) tho' his was of Gold, and cost a hundred Beeves, the others but of rusty Iron. <sup>8</sup>However, this glittering Armor became the *Modern* yet worse than his Own. Then, they agreed to exchange Horses; but when it came to the Trial, *Dryden* was afraid, and utterly unable to mount. \*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Alter hiatus in MS.* \* \* \* \* \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \* *Lucan* appeared upon a fiery Horse, of admirable Shape, but head-strong, bearing the Rider where he list, over the Field; he made a mighty Slaughter among the Enemy's Horse; which Destruction to stop, *Bl-ckm-re*,<sup>35</sup> a famous *Modern* (but one of the *Mercenaries*) strenuously opposed himself; and darted a Javelin, with a strong Hand, which falling short of its Mark, struck deep in the Earth. Then *Lucan* threw a Lance; but *Æsculapius* came unseen, and turn'd off the Point. *Brave Modern, said Lucan, I perceive some God protects you, for never did my Arm so deceive me before; But, what Mortal can contend with a God? Therefore, let us Fight no longer, but present Gifts to each other. Lucan* then bestowed the *Modern* a Pair of Spurs, and *Bl-ckm-re* gave *Lucan* a Bridle.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Pauca desunt.* \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* *Vid. Homer.*

<sup>34</sup> In his Dedication of the *Aeneid*, *Dryden* acknowledged *Virgil* as his master.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Richard Blackmore (c. 1650-1729), physician, and author of several tediously long epics.

*Creech*;<sup>36</sup> But, the Goddess *Dulness* took a Cloud, formed into the Shape of *Horace*, armed and mounted, and placed it in a flying Posture before Him. Glad was the Cavalier, to begin a Combat with a flying Foe, and pursued the Image, threatening loud; till at last it led him to the peaceful Bower of his Father *Ogleby*,<sup>37</sup> by whom he was disarmed, and assigned to his Repose.

Then *Pindar* slew —, and —, and *Oldham*, and —, and *Afra* the *Amazon* light of foot;<sup>38</sup> Never advancing in a direct Line, but wheeling with incredible Agility and Force, he made a terrible Slaughter among the Enemy's *Light-Horse*. Him, when *Cowley* observed, his generous Heart burnt within him, and he advanced against the fierce *Antient*, imitating his Address, and Pace, and Career, as well as the Vigour of his Horse, and his own Skill would allow. When the two Cavaliers had approach'd within the Length of three Javelins; first *Cowley* threw a Lance, which miss'd *Pindar*, and passing into the Enemy's Ranks, fell ineffectual to the Ground. Then *Pindar* darted a Javelin, so large and weighty, that scarce a dozen *Cavaliers*, as *Cavaliers* are in our degenerate Days, could raise it from the Ground: yet he threw it with Ease, and it went by an unerring Hand, singing through the Air; Nor could the *Modern* have avoided present Death, if he had not luckily opposed the Shield that had been given Him by *Venus*.<sup>39</sup> And now both Hero's drew their Swords, but the *Modern* was so aghast and disordered, that he knew not where he was; his Shield dropt from his Hands; thrice he fled, and thrice he could not escape; at last he turned, and lifting up his Hands, in the Posture of a Suppliant, *God-like Pindar*, said he, *spare my Life, and possess my Horse with these Arms; besides the Ransom which my Friends will give, when they hear I am alive, and your Prisoner. Dog*, said *Pindar*, *Let your Ransom*

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Creech (1659-1700), translator of the works of Horace and Lucretius.

<sup>37</sup> John Ogleby (1600-76) translated Virgil, Homer, and Aesop's Fables, wrote three epic poems, and for his pains was pilloried in Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* and Pope's *Dunciad*.

<sup>38</sup> John Oldham (1653-83), a formidable satirist of the Jesuits, and Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-89), novelist and dramatist, both wrote Pindarics.

<sup>39</sup> The allusion is to the love poems of Abraham Cowley (1618-67), entitled *The Mistress*.

stay with your Friends; But your Carcass shall be left for the Fowls of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field. With that, he raised his Sword, and with a mighty Stroak, cleft the wretched *Modern* in twain, the Sword pursuing the Blow; and one half lay panting on the Ground, to be trod in pieces by the Horses Feet, the other half was born by the frightened Steed thro' the Field. This <sup>9</sup>*Venus* took, and wash'd it seven times in *Ambrosia*, then struck it thrice with a Sprig of *Amarant*; upon which, the Leather grew round and soft, the Leaves turned into Feathers, and being gilded before, continued gilded still; so it became a *Dove* and She harness'd it to her Chariot. \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*  
*Hiatus valdè deflendus in MS.* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Day being far spent, and the numerous Forces of the *Moderns* half inclining to a Retreat, there issued forth from a Squadron of their *heavy armed Foot*, a Captain, whose Name was <sup>10</sup>*B--ntl--y*; in Person, the most deformed of all the *Moderns*; Tall, but without Shape or Comeliness; Large, but without Strength or Proportion. His Armour was patch'd up of a thousand incoherent Pieces;<sup>40</sup> and the Sound of it, as he march'd, was loud and dry, like that made by the Fall of a Sheet of Lead, which an *Etesian Wind*<sup>41</sup> blows suddenly down from the Roof of some Steeple. His Helmet was of old rusty Iron, but the Vizard was Brass, which tainted by his Breath, corrupted into Copperas, not wanted Gall from the same Fountain; so, that whenever provoked by Anger or Labour, an atramentous<sup>42</sup> Quality, of most malignant Nature, was seen to distil from his Lips. In his <sup>11</sup>right Hand he grasp'd a Flail, and (that he might never be

<sup>9</sup> I do not approve the Author's Judgment in this, for I think Cowley's *Pindaricks* are much preferable to his *Mistress*.

<sup>10</sup> The Episode of *B--ntl--y* and *W--tt--n*.

<sup>11</sup> The Person here spoken of, is famous for letting fly at every Body without Distinction, and using mean and foul Scurrilities.

<sup>40</sup> alluding to the numerous quotations in Bentley's *Treatises*.

from the north-west for about six weeks of every summer.

<sup>41</sup> a Mediterranean wind that blows

<sup>42</sup> inky, black.

unprovided of an *offensive* Weapon) a Vessel full of *Ordure* in his Left: Thus, compleatly arm'd, he advanc'd with a slow and heavy Pace, where the *Modern* Chiefs were holding a Consult upon the Sum of Things; who, as he came onwards, laugh'd to behold his crooked Leg, and hump Shoulder, which his Boot and Armour vainly endeavouring to hide were forced to comply with, and expose. The Generals made use of him for his Talent of Railing; which kept within Government, proved frequently of great Service to their Cause, but at other times did more Mischief than Good; For at the least Touch of Offence, and often without any at all, he would, like a wounded Elephant, convert it against his Leaders. Such, at this Juncture, was the Disposition of *B--ntl-y*, grieved to see the Enemy prevail, and dissatisfied with every Body's Conduct but his own. He humbly gave the *Modern* Generals to understand, that he conceived, with great Submission, they were all a Pack of *Rogues*, and *Fools*, and *Sons of Whores*, and *d--mn'd Cowards*, and *confounded Loggerheads*, and *illiterate Whelps*, and *nonsensical Scoundrels*; That if Himself had been constituted General, those *presumptuous Dogs*, the *Antients*, would long before this, have been beaten out of the Field.<sup>12</sup> You, said he, *sit here idle, but, when I, or any other valiant Modern, kill an Enemy, you are sure to seize the Spoil. But, I will not march one Foot against the Foe, till you all swear to me, that, whomever I take or kill, his Arms I shall quietly possess.* *B--ntl-y* having spoke thus, *Scaliger*<sup>43</sup> bestowing him a sower Look; *Miscreant Prater*, said he, *Eloquent only in thine own Eyes, Thou railest without Wit, or Truth, or Discretion, The Malignity of thy Temper perverteth Nature, Thy Learning makes thee more Barbarous, thy Study of Humanity, more Inhuman; Thy Convers amongst Poets more groveling, miry, and dull. All Arts of civilizing others, render thee rude and untractable; Courts have taught thee ill Manners, and polite Conversation has finished thee a Pedant. Besides, a greater Coward burdeneth not*

<sup>12</sup> *Vid. Homer de Thersite.*

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), scholar and literary critic, one of the great figures of his day.

The irony of this passage is that Bentley had defended Scaliger against Boyle's attack on him.



*the Army. But never despond, I pass my Word, whatever Spoil thou takest, shall certainly be thy own; though, I hope, that vile Carcass will first become a prey to Kites and Worms.*

*B--ntl--y* durst not reply; but half choaked with Spleen and Rage, withdrew, in full Resolution of performing some great Achievment. With him, for his Aid and Companion, he took his beloved *W--tt--n*; resolving by Policy or Surprize, to attempt some neglected Quarter of the *Antients* Army. They began their March over Carcasses of their slaughtered Friends; then to the Right of their own Forces: then wheeled Northward, till they came to *Aldrovandus's* Tomb,<sup>44</sup> which they pass'd on the side of the declining Sun. And now they arrived with Fear towards the Enemy's Outguards; looking about, if haply, they might spy the Quarters of the Wounded, or some straggling Sleepers, unarm'd and remote from the rest. As when two *Mungrel-Curs*, whom *native Greediness*, and *domestick Want*, provoke, and join in Partnership, though fearful, nightly to invade the Folds of some rich Grazier; They, with Tails depress'd, and lolling Tongues, creep soft and slow; mean while, the conscious *Moon*, now in her *Zenith*, on their guilty Heads, darts perpendicular Rays; Nor dare they bark, though much provok'd at her refulgent Visage, whether seen in Puddle by Reflexion, or in Sphear direct; but one surveys the Region round, while t'other scouts the Plain, if haply, to discover at distance from the Flock, some *Carcass* half devoured, the Refuse of gorged Wolves, or ominous Ravens. So march'd this lovely, loving Pair of Friends, nor with less Fear and Circumpection; when, at distance, they might perceive two shining Suits of Armor, hanging upon an Oak, and the Owners not far off in a profound Sleep. The two Friends drew Lots, and the pursuing of this Adventure, fell to *B--ntl--y*; On he went, and in his Van *Confusion* and *Amaze*; while *Horror* and *Affright* brought up the Rear. As he came near; Behold two Hero's of the *Antients* Army, *Phalaris* and *Æsop*, lay fast asleep: *B--ntl--y* would fain have dispatch'd them both, and stealing close, aimed his Flail at *Phalaris's* Breast. But, then, the Goddess

<sup>44</sup> Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), of Bologna, compiled voluminous

works on natural history.



*Affright* interposing, caught the *Modern* in her icy Arms, and dragg'd him from the Danger she foresaw; For both the dormant Hero's happened to turn at the same Instant, tho' soundly Sleeping, and busy in a Dream. <sup>45</sup>For *Phalaris* was just that Minute dreaming, how a most vile *Poetaster* had lampoon'd him, and how he had got him roaring in his *Bull*.<sup>45</sup> And *Æsop* dream'd, that as he and the *Antient Chiefs* were lying on the Ground, a *Wild Ass* broke loose, ran about trampling and kicking, and dunging in their Faces. *B-ntl-y* leaving the two Hero's asleep, seized on both their Armors, and withdrew in quest of his Darling *W--tt-n*.

He, in the mean time, had wandred long in search of some Enterprize, till at length, he arrived at a small *Rivulet*, that issued from a Fountain hard by, call'd in the Language of mortal Men, *Helicon*. Here he stopt, and, parch'd with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid Stream. Thrice, with profane Hands, he essay'd to raise the Water to his Lips, and thrice it slipt all thro' his Fingers. Then he stoop'd prone on his Breast, but e'er his Mouth had kiss'd the liquid Crystal, *Apollo* came, and, in the Channel, held his *Shield* betwixt the *Modern* and the Fountain, so that he drew up nothing but *Mud*. For, altho' no Fountain on Earth can compare with the Clearness of *Helicon*, yet there lies at Bottom, a thick sediment of *Slime* and *Mud*; For, so *Apollo* begg'd of *Jupiter*, as a Punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed Lips, and for a Lesson to all, not to *draw too deep, or far from the Spring*.

At the Fountain Head, *W--tt-n* discerned two Hero's; The one he could not distinguish,<sup>46</sup> but the other was soon known for *Temple*, General of the *Allies* to the *Antients*. His Back was turned, and he was employ'd in Drinking large Draughts in his Helmet, from the Fountain, where he had withdrawn himself to rest from the Toils of the War. *W--tt-n*, observing him, with

<sup>45</sup> This is according to Homer, who tells the Dreams of those who were kill'd in their Sleep.

<sup>45</sup> Phalaris (c. 570 B.C.), a tyrant of Sicily, was said to have roasted his victims in a brazen bull. When

finally overthrown he was burned in his own bull.

<sup>46</sup> Boyle.

quaking Knees, and trembling Hands, spoke thus to Himself: *14Oh, that I could kill this Destroyer of our Army, what Renown should I purchase among the Chiefs! But to issue out against Him, Man for Man, Shield against Shield, and Launce against Launce; what Modern of us dare? For, he fights like a God, and Pallas or Apollo are ever at his Elbow. But, Oh, Mother!*<sup>47</sup> *if what Fame reports, be true, that I am the Son of so great a Goddess, grant me to Hit Temple with this Launce, that the Stroak may send Him to Hell, and that I may return in Safety and Triumph, laden with his Spoils.* The first Part of his Prayer, the Gods granted, at the Intercession of His Mother and of Momus; but the rest, by a perverse Wind sent from Fate, was scattered in the Air. Then *W-tt-n* grasp'd his Launce, and brandishing it thrice over his head, darted it with all his Might, the Goddess, his Mother, at the same time, adding Strength to his Arm. Away the Launce went hizzing, and reach'd even to the Belt of the averted *Antient*, upon which, lightly grazing, it fell to the Ground. *Temple* neither felt the Weapon touch him, nor heard it fall; And *W-tt-n*, might have escaped to his Army, with the Honor of having remitted his Launce against so great a Leader, unrevenged; But, *Apollo* enraged, that a Javelin, flung by the Assistance of so foul a Goddess, should pollute his Fountain, put on the shape of —, and softly came to young *Boyle*, who then accompanied *Temple*: He pointed, first to the Launce, then to the distant *Modern* that flung it, and commanded the young Hero to take immediate Revenge. *Boyle*, clad in a suit of Armor which had been given him by all the Gods, immediately advanced against the trembling Foe, who now fled before him. As a young Lion, in the *Libyan Plains*, or *Araby Desert*, sent by his aged Sire to hunt for Prey, or Health, or Exercise; He scours along, wishing to meet some Tiger from the Mountains, or a furious Boar; If Chance, a *Wild Ass*, with Brayings importune, affronts his Ear, the generous Beast, though loathing to disdain his Claws with Blood so vile, yet much provok'd at the offensive Noise; which *Echo*, foolish Nymph, like her ill judging Sex,

<sup>44</sup> Vid. Homer.

<sup>47</sup> The goddess Criticism. See p. 463.

repeats much louder, and with more Delight than *Philomela's* Song: He vindicates the Honor of the Forest, and hunts the noisy, long-ear'd Animal. So *W--tt--n* fled, so *Boyle* pursued. But *W--tt--n* heavy-arm'd, and slow of foot, began to slack his Course; when his Lover *B--ntl--y* appeared, returning laden with the Spoils of the two sleeping *Antients*. *Boyle* observed him well, and soon discovering the Helmet and Shield of *Phalaris*, his Friend, both which he had lately with his own Hands, new polish'd and gilded;<sup>48</sup> Rage sparkled in His Eyes, and leaving his Pursuit after *W--tt--n*, he furiously rush'd on against this new Approacher. Fain would he be revenged on both; but both now fled different Ways: <sup>15</sup>And as a Woman in a little House, that gets a painful Livelihood by Spinning; if chance her *Geese* be scattered o'er the Common, she courses round the Plain from side to side, compelling here and there, the Stragglers to the Flock; They cackle loud, and flutter o'er the Champain. So *Boyle* pursued, so fled this Pair of Friends: finding at length, their Flight was vain, they bravely joyn'd, and drew themselves in *Phalanx*. First, *B--ntl--y* threw a Spear with all his Force,<sup>49</sup> hoping to pierce the Enemy's Breast; But *Pallas* came unseen, and in the Air took off the Point, and clap'd on one of *Lead*, which after a dead Bang against the Enemy's Shield, fell blunted to the Ground. Then *Boyle* observing well his Time, took a Launce of wondrous Length and sharpness; and as this Pair of Friends compacted stood close Side to Side, he wheel'd him to the right, and with unusual Force, darted the Weapon.<sup>50</sup> *B--ntl--y* saw his Fate approach, and flanking down his Arms, close to his Ribs, hoping to save his Body; in went the Point, passing through Arm and Side, nor stopt, or spent its Force, till it had also pierc'd the valiant *W--tt--n*, who going to sustain his dying Friend, shared his Fate. As, when a skilful Cook has truss'd a

<sup>15</sup> *Vid. Homer. This is also, after the manner of Homer; the Woman's getting a painful Livelihood by Spinning, has nothing to do with the Similitude, nor would be excusable without such an Authority.*

<sup>48</sup> Boyle's edition of the Epistles of *Phalaris* (1695).

<sup>49</sup> Bentley's first *Dissertation* (1697).

<sup>50</sup> Boyle's reply, which was hailed by

the wits as crushing, was superficial and uninformed, measured against Bentley's enormous erudition.

Brace of *Woodcocks*, He, with Iron Skewer, pierces the tender Sides of both, their Legs and Wings close pinion'd to their Ribs; So was this pair of Friends transfix'd, till down they fell, joyn'd in their Lives, joyn'd in their Deaths; so closely joyn'd, that *Charon* would mistake them both for one, and waft them over *Styx* for half his Fare. Farewel, beloved, loving Pair; Few Equals have you left behind: And happy and immortal shall you be, if all my Wit and Eloquence can make you.

And, now     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*

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\* *Desunt catetera.*

FINIS